



NATIONAL FAMILIES IN ACTION

Parent Corps®



April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Local estimates of Cobb youth ages 12-20 who used alcohol in the past 30 days:

- 21,042 youth reported drinking
- 5 percent were 12-13 year olds
- 18 percent were 14-15 year olds
- 32 percent were 16-17 year olds
- 52 percent were 18-20 year olds

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among our young people. Youth use alcohol 10 times more than all illegal drugs combined. Alcohol is the leading contributor to the top three leading causes of death among young people. Underage drinking is reported in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes and 50 to 65 percent

of youth suicides. As many as two thirds of all sexual assaults and date rape are linked to alcohol use. Alcohol is also a contributing factor in unprotected sex among young people, exposing them to unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/Aids.

Research indicates that most underage drinking takes place in private settings such as home parties.

Private parties often provide a means to introduce younger youth (ages 14-16) to alcohol by older youth (ages 17-19). One in 12 parents of teens said they allowed the friends of their own teens to drink in their home under their supervision.

Communities large and small have begun to address the problem of social hosting through dialogue and local policy making. Currently,

hosts who allow underage drinking on their property as well as supply the alcohol consumed or possessed by the minors may be in violation of two distinct laws; furnishing alcohol to a minor and allowing underage drinking to occur on property they control.

To advocate more about underage drinking in Cobb County, what you as a citizen can do to curtail this problem and the impact underage drinking has on you the taxpayer you are invited to a Town Hall meeting

**Monday, March 26
6:30- 8:30 pm
Southern Polytechnic
University Theatre.**



Watch Out for the Latest “Flavor Enhancements”



Anheuser-Busch is currently marketing a new product called “Spykes.” The pre-

packaged 1.7 oz glass or 2 oz plastic bottle comes in four different flavors. Spicy Lime, Spicy Mango, Hot Melons, and Hot Chocolate.

Spykes is a flavor you add to your beer, other beverages or a chilled shooter. It contains 12 percent alcohol, caffeine,

ginseng, and guarana. Currently being sold for \$0.75 to \$1.00 each or sold in packages of 24 bottle flavor cases.

Parents need to be on the lookout because they are the same shape and size as small perfume or mouth-wash bottles.

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Special points of interest:

- 7.2 million youth ages 12-17 drank at least once in the past year.
- 1 million youth ages 12-17 drank at least once a week or more in the past year.
- 66 percent of young adults, ages 18-20 who drank heavily (5 or more drinks) drove under the influence of alcohol in the past year.

Inexperience, Fear Triggers Anger With Many Teen Drivers

In general, teens have a hard time controlling their emotions. They yell and scream and say things they don't mean. But what happens when they are behind the wheel and someone makes them angry?

According to the National Youth Driver Survey, 55 percent of teens report seeing their friends enraged behind the wheel.

But expert say, for teens, when someone cuts them off and endangers their life, road rage is less about anger and more about fear. Psychologist Dr. Nadine Kaslow explains: "They don't have as much experience or competence at handling challenging situations."

Which is why parents need to talk to their kids about the dangers of road rage be-



fore they are ever handed the keys. Talk about other productive ways of dealing with those emotions when they are angry on the road, or when you are scared and are on the road. If you find that your child has had an episode of road rage, first, take the keys away with a plan for

them to get them back. Also, talk to them about their anger management issues. Find more productive ways for them to release their emotions.

Peer pressure can also play into road rage. Teens may want to show off by acting macho for their peers. This is one more reason to not allow teenage passengers in the car.

Be sure to sign your teen up for the defensive driving class being offered at Walton High School on Saturday, April 14, 2007 from 9:00-3:00 in the commons. Reservations are a must and forms are available in the recent Raider Review. Class limited to 60 applicants.

Parents are required to stay the first hour of the program.

Prom Promise Week a Big Success

Walton High School's prom was held last Friday night, March 16, 2007 at the Galleria.

At lunch periods during the week the Walton PTSA Prom Promise committee set up tables in the hallway and provided opportunities for the students to stop by and sign the Walton Prom Promise pledge which stated they would not drink or use other drugs on prom night, they would not ride with someone who had been drinking or using other drugs, they

would encourage their friends to have an alcohol and drug free night, they would call their parents or guardian for a ride home if they found themselves in a situation where they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and they committed to celebrating a safe and healthy prom night.

We had a total of 726 Walton prom promise

Traffic fatalities increases during the several weeks around prom and graduation dates.

pledges signed and the committee is contacting all those that signed the pledge to make sure they stayed true to the promise. We encourage you to talk to your prom goers and ask them if they remained drug and alcohol free that night and encourage them as they go into the graduation month that they remember to be alcohol and drug free at all times.

Kids Put Embarrassing Videos Online

YouTube is a popular free video sharing website which lets users upload, view, and share video clips. The wide variety of site content includes movie and TV clips, as well as amateur content such as videoblogging and short original videos.

Kids today are using their cell phones, video cameras, or webcam to record all kinds of pranks. With 70-thousand



videos a day being uploaded to *YouTube*, it is kind of hard to stand out. So the kids find they have to keep pushing the envelope-or do something more outrageous-to be able to get attention.

Parents need to remind their teens that, besides their friends, teachers, companies, and college admissions staff might watch their videos. And for kids who think

they can post embarrassing video of others and remain anonymous they should think again. It is pretty easy to track down who loaded something up to *YouTube* if you have any sort of sophisticated search mechanism.

If your teens wants to post something on *YouTube* suggest they do so only if it will help others see them in a positive light.

Parents need to be “ON TOP OF IT”

Teens, teens, teens: What is a parent to do?

Back when I was in high school....

We did not have cell phones or the internet. We depended on pay phones and the library. We did not dye our hair black and (apparently) avoid sunlight. We put lemon juice on our hair and took pride in our healthy tans. We did not worry about school shootings or propositions from promiscuous teachers. Those things were unheard of. On-line predators were basically non-existent because there was no internet. Musicians used to sing about having fun and being in love. Today the airwaves are full of references to crime and the mistreatment of women. Drugs and pornography were only available to teens that sought them out. Today, those

things are so readily available that children don't need to seek them out. It used to be shocking if someone brought a gun to school. Today it is the norm in many schools.

Teens have a lot to deal with these days—as if there is not already enough going on in their lives. Parents need to be “on top of it” if they expect to raise a happy, healthy, and well-adjusted teen.

Here are a few things that parents can do:

1. **Keep the lines of communication open. Talk often.**
2. **Raise a child that feels valued, respected, and loved.**
3. **Pay attention to what is going on in your child's life.**

4. **Recognize the warning signs for drug/alcohol use, depression, and future violence. Take action, if necessary.**
5. **Encourage participation in extra-curricular activities.**
6. **Set reasonable limits and boundaries then enforce them in a fair manner.**
7. **Spend time with your teen.**
8. **Seek professional help for your teen if you think it is necessary.**

Following these guidelines will not necessarily guarantee a happy, healthy, and well-adjusted teen, but you can bet it's a good start.



What is an Eating Disorder? Some Basic Facts

Eating disorders—such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder—include extreme emotions, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding weight and food issues. Eating disorders are serious emotional and physical problems that can have life-threatening consequences for female and males.

Anorexia Nervosa is characterized by self-starvation and excessive weight loss. Most sufferers are motivated by the strong desire to be thin and fear of becoming obese. Anorexics usually strive for perfections—they set very high standards for themselves and feel they always have to prove their ability. They usually put the needs of others before themselves but they will also feel that the only control they have in their life is in the area of food and weight.

Symptoms include:

- Refusal to maintain body weight at or above minimally normal weight for height, body type, age, and activity level
- Intense fear of weight gain or being “fat”
- Feeling “fat” or overweight despite dramatic weight loss

Loss of menstrual periods

Extreme concern with body weight and shape

Bulimia Nervosa is characterized by a secretive cycle of binge eating followed by purging. Around eight percent of women will develop bulimia nervosa at some point in their lives. They are usually people who do not feel secure about their own self worth, tending to please others, while actually hiding away their own feelings. Food becomes the source of comfort. Bulimia includes eating large amounts of food—more than most people would eat in one meal—in short periods of time, then getting rid of the food and calories through vomiting, laxative abuse, or over-exercising.

Symptoms include:

- Repeated episodes of bingeing and purging
- Feeling out of control during a binge and eating beyond the point of comfortable fullness
- Purging after a binge (typically by self-induced vomiting, abuse of laxatives, diet pills and/or diuretics, excessive exercise, or fasting)

Frequent dieting

Extreme concern with body weight and shape

Binge Eating Disorder (also known as Compulsive overeating) is characterized primarily by periods of uncontrolled, impulsive, or continuous eating beyond the point of feeling comfortably full. While there is no purging, there may be sporadic fasts or repetitive diets and often feelings of shame or self-hatred after a binge. People who overeat compulsively may struggle with anxiety, depression, and loneliness, which can contribute to their unhealthy episodes of binge eating. Body weight may vary from normal to mild, moderate, or severe obesity.

Cultural and social pressures are a huge factor in eating disorders; the pressure to be slim is vast and we are bombarded with pictures of thin models on television or air-brushed men and women in magazines on every shelf in every news stand.

Learn all you can about anorexia, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder. Genuine awareness will help you avoid judgmental attitudes about food, weight, and body shape.



NATIONAL FAMILIES IN ACTION

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Drug Prevention
Starts Here

www.parentcorps.org

START TALKING
BEFORE THEY
START DRINKING
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

Cobb County Town Hall Meeting
On Underage Drinking
Monday, March 26, 2007
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Location: Southern Polytechnic State University
Joe Mack Wilson Student Center Theatre
1100 South Marietta Pkwy., Marietta, GA 30060
For directions visit - <http://www.spsu.edu/home/prospective/visit.html>

Alcohol + Kids = Bad News and 21,042 or 29% of Cobb youth ages 12-20 have used alcohol in the past 30 days - please answer this "Call to Action" by attending!

Youths and adults to deliver multi-media "realities" presentation
Exhibitors to provide prevention resources

YOUR attendance and help is needed to:

- ☆ Increase community awareness on the issue of underage drinking, and
- ☆ Identify how/where underage drinking affects the community, and
- ☆ Advocate for use of specific research-based solutions to the problem

Hosted and supported by:



Funded by the Region One's Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities,
Addictive Diseases Office, Georgia Department of Human Resources

More information @ www.CUDTF.org or 404-223-9812

Where there's smoke... there's an apology

When the United Kingdom government downgraded cannabis from a class B drug to a class C drug in January 2004, with police encouraged to adopt a soft approach towards anyone caught in possession, it seemed the first steps towards decriminalization had been taken. Many people welcomed this move as a more realistic way of dealing with drug use.

But in the past few weeks and months, a series of research studies and news report from the United Kingdom has undermined cannabis's reputation to the point where they are considering a reversal of the policy.

Record numbers of teenagers are requiring drug treatment as a result of smoking skunk, the highly potent cannabis strain that is 25 times stronger than resin sold a decade ago. Skunk which is grown hydroponically (without soil), indoors without natural sunlight, might contain as much as 300mg THC compared to a joint 30 years ago that would contain 10mg of

THC.

22,000 people were treated last year for cannabis addiction and almost half of those affected were under 18. Doctors and drug experts are warning that skunk can be as damaging as cocaine and heroine, leading to mental health problems and schizophrenia for thousands of teenagers.



The Independent, a local Britain newspaper, 10 years ago organized a march to London's Hyde Park where 16,000 supporters helped force the Government into downgrading the legal status of cannabis to a class C drug. Today that paper is writing an apology to reverse its campaign. "The skunk smoked by the majority of young Britons bears no relation to traditional cannabis resin-with 25-fold increase in the amount of the main psychoactive ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), typically found in the early 1990s", the article says.

New research will show cannabis to be more dangerous than LSD and ecstasy. The results will increase the pressure on the Government to have a full debate on drugs, and a new independent UK drug policy commission being launched next month will call for a rethink on the issue. The Government will have to inform the Britain community that cannabis is harmful and does lead to schizophrenia as reported in many teen studies.